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SMALL FARM Digest

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Should You Get Into Value-Added Food Products?

Economic forces, federal farm policies, and consumer choices are causing small farmers to look at the business of farming in new ways. Today's successful farmers are, of necessity, increasingly becoming small business entrepreneurs.

Many small farm experts and policy makers across the nation believe that local value-added agricultural food production - where farmers assume more processing steps and sell through direct marketing techniques - is a critical strategy to sustain many small farmers and their communities.

The world's agricultural trade is rapidly shifting from commodities to products. Consumers are demanding products with traits to meet their specific needs. Global competition is intense.

To survive in today's dynamic market, small farmers must interpret market signals accurately. They must carefully consider what mix of crops and other agricultural products will maintain crop diversity and flexibility, and provide more value-added farm income.

Value-Added Defined. Value-added means adding features - desirable to customers - to a raw agricultural, marine, aquacultural, or forestry material used to make a product. Drying, canning, juicing, combining ingredients, handcrafting, and unique packaging and marketing techniques can add value.

Everyone who adds value to a product as it goes from farm to consumer gets paid. Vertical integration - the farmer doing production, processing, and distributing - can be good for those farmers who are willing and able.

Many farmers have not gone into value-added food products because they



Value-added food products like specialty jams are popular at the Crescent City Farmers Market in New Orleans, LA.—PHOTO BY BILL TARPENNING, USDA.

are concentrating on what they have traditionally done best - producing a commodity. Doing more of the processing and marketing activities involved in the marketing chain takes time, skill, and extra labor.

Value-added examples include:

- Producing a tomato herb barbecue sauce may earn more profit for a producer than selling tomatoes and herbs separately.
- 23 rancher members of the Rocky Mountain Beef Cooperative in Colorado do a growing business by producing USDA certified all-natural beef for discerning customers, high-end restaurants, and health food supermarkets.

Customer Preference Trends. Today's customers want taste, nutrition, freshness, variety, and convenience in foods. Baby Boomers want products that promote health. Ethnic populations want foods from their cultural heritage. Kosher, halal, and organic foods are increasingly in demand. Knowing food preferences of particular customer groups can help farmers target products to specialized markets.

Pros and Cons. Direct marketing, niche markets, and value-added processing offer farmers a share of the 50 percent of the food dollar now going to so-called "middlemen." Value-added based food is the fastest growing segment of the food industry.

Unique value-added products can be marketed to select groups willing to pay higher prices for quality. The key is finding a unique niche for your specialty product and a customer base.

Getting a new product into the highly competitive retail market is difficult. Food processing giants have an edge on processing efficiency and production costs. At least two out of every three new food products introduced fail, due mostly to lack of customer appeal. Only one in five new businesses succeeds for more than three years. Failure to develop and analyze cash-flow statements is a leading cause.

It takes time to sell a new product concept to retailers. Can you afford to invest in a new product for about three years before making a profit? This is often the length of time needed to break even.

Market success depends on many fac-

tors, including finding new ways to add value to products, having a good product customers want, using appropriate technology to save processing costs or increase quality, and finding new markets.

RESOURCES FOR NEW VALUE-ADDED FOOD PRODUCERS

Taking an old family recipe or new food innovation into the marketplace requires technical and marketing assistance and capital investment.

Your Land-Grant University Resource.

For information on how to process and market an agricultural product, turn to the small farm coordinator or value-added agriculture specialist at your state land-grant university. To access directories, see the CSREES Small Farm Program website (www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm).

Many land-grant universities have food processing centers specifically designed to promote value-added processing. Examples include the Institute of Food Sciences in Arkansas-Fayetteville at the University of Arkansas, the Food and Fiber Center at Mississippi State University, the Food Processing Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the Oklahoma Food and Agricultural Products Research and Technology Center at Oklahoma State University.

Through entrepreneurial assistance programs, center specialists offer a wide range of advice, free or for a small fee, on site or in regional short courses, to those developing new food products.

Most centers are equipped with scaled-down versions of industry food processing facilities for meats, cereals, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables, including specialized equipment for thermal processing, drying, freezing, packaging, milling, baking, and fermentation. University food scientists can assist producers with processing, testing, and product development on a small scale.

These centers allow small entrepreneurs to work with university technical staff to develop new products, evaluate ingredients, test new equipment, or explore other manufacturing techniques without investing in equipment.

The Food Processing Center at the

University of Nebraska-Lincoln offers a unique service - the Customer Processing Network. This is a confidential database of existing food processors, their capabilities, down time or excess processing capacity, and contract information. The Center puts entrepreneurs and existing food manufacturers in contact with processors; helps source ingredients, containers, and new and used equipment; advises about packaging; and helps find available buildings for processing facilities.

Other Resources. Organizations like the Agricultural Utilization and Research Institute (AURI) in Minnesota, a nonprofit corporation, offer similar marketing assistance and processing facilities to food and non-food entrepreneurs.

University Discoveries of New Food Products. New value-added products, businesses, and jobs can result when university researchers investigate new plant and animal products. University researchers work with farmers in field trials of promising agricultural products and partner with industry and farmers when an idea merits commercialization.

Four Oklahoma State University researchers, Drs. Niels Maness, Gerald Brusewitz, Sue Knight, and Ravi Kanamangala, utilized the heart-healthy properties of pecan oil and its potential for salad dressings while investigating oil extraction of pecans to extend shelf life. They worked with the Oklahoma Pecan Growers Association to identify Bob Knight, an innovative small farmer who agreed to experiment with new products in the university food processing facilities.

Knight plans to begin test-marketing a variety of pecan oil products under his Knight Creek Farms label.

Business Resources. Each state has a development center under the Small Business Administration (SBA) that offers help to expand agriculturally related businesses. These centers are listed in your phone directory government pages.

CSREES Small Farm InfoLine

1-800/583-3071

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SBA also funds the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) - retired and active executives who offer free expertise to small businesses. State chapters are listed in your telephone business pages. State economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, manufacturers and suppliers of small business products and services, and small business or industry trade associations offer help to entrepreneurs.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR A NEW FOOD ENTREPRENEUR

Market Research. Is there a market for your product? Identify your competition and potential customers. Then decide what to produce, what ingredients to use, and how to package and market your product.

Business Structure. Will you be the sole owner, have a partnership, belong to a community-owned cooperative, or have another form of business?

Business Plan. Develop a business plan that details company information, product or service description, operations and marketing plan, management team, time line, critical risks, community impacts, and a financial plan.

Liability. Carefully consider insurance for product, premise, and employer's liability, and for physical damage.

Regulations. Contact your state to learn about current registration, licensing, and zoning requirements from federal, state, county, and city agencies for your type of operation.

Technology. Keep up with technological advances relating to your product.

Food Safety. Food has a legal and regulating structure of its own that sets it apart from any other business because it is so directly related to consumer health. Food safety is a major issue.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture regulates meat and poultry products. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates other food products. Contact your state department of agriculture to find out current rules. Understand relevant health and regulatory issues before identifying appropriate processing procedures for your food product. Hazard

Analysis and Critical Control Points need to be identified and monitored to ensure that food safety requirements are met and liability risks are minimized. See websites below for information.

Confidentiality Agreements. A lawyer can draw up a confidentiality

■ www.foodsafety.gov/

Gateway to Government Food Safety Information - from federal, state, and local government agencies.

■ vm.cfsan.fda.gov

FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition - information on food additives and pre-market approval, food labeling and nutrition, the 1999 Food Code, and food labeling questions and answers.

■ www.fsis.usda.gov/

Food safety rules for meat, poultry, and seafood as detailed in the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) rules accessed through USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service at phone 202-720-9113 or this website.

agreement, which allows you to discuss your idea with others from whom you need advice or services, while protecting your idea from theft.

Processing Regulations. Processing regulations vary among states. State health departments, university food science departments, and food tech centers can describe processing rules.

Trade Name Searches, Patents, and Copyrights. Do a trade name search before giving your product a name to be sure that no other business is already using it. Infringing on a trademark or copyright can result in substantial legal liability. Consider protecting your product by trademark and/or patent, and protecting your intellectual property (sales brochures, for example). Lawyers or librarians can advise.

Home Kitchens. Regulations relating to producing food products in home

kitchens vary among states. Many state laws specify that food products made from farm-raised products must be produced in a commercial kitchen approved by the state department of health. Contact your local health department for rules.

Commercial Kitchens. Setting up your own processing facility is costly. Consider renting time to manufacture your food product in a local commercial, inspected kitchen.

Co-Packers. People who can manufacture a food product for you are called co-packers or contract packers. Consider hiring one or more to make your product until you can finance your own processing facility. Get legal advice on what a product contract should include.

To produce in quantity, your recipe must be broken down into the Standard Manufacturing Procedure (SMP), which includes every step in a manufacturing process and preparation instructions.

Selling Your Family Recipe. To produce and market large quantities, consider selling your product idea and recipe outright to a manufacturer.

Setting Up Your Own Processing Facility. Research local and state laws. Expect to pay \$50,000 to \$100,000.

Packaging Materials. Non-glass, well-sealed plastic jars or bags are good containers for food products. Extension specialists and university food processing centers can refer you to packaging companies.

Regional Product Identity. Labels and packaging design should emphasize the unique aspects of your product's regional and cultural identity. Many state departments of agriculture offer grants to help farmers develop labels and packaging that promote regional products.

Labeling Rules. U.S. Department of Agriculture rules govern meat and poultry products. U.S. Food and Drug Administration rules govern labels for products other than meat and poultry.

Know the latest state and federal labeling requirements for agricultural products. Study the Nutrition Labeling and Information Act (NLEA) of 1990. See Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regula-

tions, Part 101 (21 CFR 101), available in public libraries.

For help with label content, consult your state cooperative extension specialist. Ask if your state university can analyze product content in campus laboratories. Food consultants and many commercial laboratories also do this as part of their business.

Bar Codes. Bar codes are needed on labels to scan product prices at checkout counters. Bar code rules and how to obtain one for your product are available from the Universal Product Council, Inc., at www.upc-council.org or by calling 937-435-3870.

Label and Packaging Design. Design your own labels and packaging or hire a designer. Designers can be found through local chapters of the American

Institute of Graphic Arts.

Pricing. Cover your production, packaging, delivery, and overhead costs.

Marketing. Farmer entrepreneurs are experts in growing and producing products but may need marketing advice. Businesses often fail because of lack of marketing knowledge and management skill, not for lack of a good product. Take your business plan, business card or brochure, professional invoices, product samples, and production records when you meet potential clients. Have a fax and answering machine.

Local Networking. Creative community networking links up local labor to process, package, and market products in the region where made.

Marketing Outlets. Will you sell your product directly to customers through a

roadside stand, farmers market, a community-supported business, a mail order catalogue, website, delivery service, cooperative direct mail advertising, or to chefs in independent restaurants? What about trade associations, cooperatives, local retailers, or wholesalers?

Locally owned food stores are a good place to start. Consider high-end grocery and natural food chains, and purchasing agents for specialty stores in airports, cruise ships, hotel chains, health food stores and cooperatives, and warehouse stores. Major food chains are more difficult places to establish a foothold.

Today's successful small farmers are small business entrepreneurs who are producing a variety of higher-value, processed products made on-farm and sold increasingly by a variety of direct marketing techniques rather than through a middleman. The agribusiness that adds desirable features to a farm-raised product that customers want is the business that will prosper.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

■ Entrepreneur Assistance Program at the Food and Fiber Center at Mississippi State University. Call 662-325-2160 or write Food and Fiber Center, Mississippi State University, Box 9642, Mississippi State, MS 39762-9642. For the free Mississippi Specialty Foods Newsletter, call Ann Sansing, Editor at 601-325-2160, or see website www.ext.msstate.edu/ecrd/ffc/ffc.html.

■ Food Processing Program at the Institute of Food Science and Engineering at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. See website www.uark.edu/depts/ifse/, or write Institute of Food Science and Engineering, 272 Young Avenue, Fayetteville, AR 72704. Call 501-575-4040 to order their free newsletter.

■ Entrepreneurship Assistance Program at the Oklahoma Food and Agricultural Products Research and Technology Center at Oklahoma State University, 148 FAPC, Stillwater, OK 74078 (or call Rodney Holcomb at 405-744-6272). See website www.okstate.edu/OSU_Ag/fapc.

■ National Entrepreneur Assistance Program, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Food Processing Center, Lincoln, NE. For information about the program's Custom Processing Network and other services, write Arlis Burney, UNL Food Processing Center, 143 Filley Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583-0928 or call 402-472-8930. E-mail aburney1@unl.edu; website foodsci.unl.edu/fpc/market/ent.htm.

■ Delta Enterprise Network, an evolving group of farmers, entrepreneurs, and others interested in creating new business ventures and cooperatives in the Delta regions of AR, IL, KY, LA, MS, MO, and TN. To discuss an idea for an agri-business, see website www.deltanetwork.org/ or contact Jim Worstell at e-mail jwurstell@futura.net, or write to Delta Land and Community, 920 Highway 153, Almyra, AR 72003 (phone 870-673-6346).

Small Farm Specialist Joins USDA/CSREES



Dr. Enrique "Nelson" Escobar, from Langston University in Oklahoma, joined the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) Small Farm Program in January for a one-year assignment.

Such an exchange allows a land-grant extension specialist to recommend ways to meet the needs of small farmers. In return, the specialist gains a national perspective of small farm issues.

Dr. Escobar provides leadership for extension goat production programs at Langston University and is recognized nationwide for his leadership in extension programs for small ruminants. He serves as statewide coordinator for sustainable agriculture for the Southern Region SARE.

His USDA responsibilities include work on several critical small farm initiatives.

Your Small Farm Neighbors

Earnie and Martha Bohner: Marketing a Taste of the Ozarks

Earnie and Martha Bohner, owners of Persimmon Hill Berry Farm - experts in value-added food products - began their Ozarks farm business as a u-pick blueberry operation on 75 acres near Branson, MO.

One of the Bohners' success secrets is being willing to diversify and try new things until they hit on what makes money. At each stage of their developing business, the Missouri Alternatives Center consistently provided marketing and production information.

"Whenever we have problems with our value-added products, we consult Dr. Doug Holt, Director of the Office of Value-Added Agriculture Outreach at the University of Missouri. Doug takes current research concepts and applies them to on-farm processing. He explains the rules and regulations pertaining to pro-



Earnie and Martha Bohner and family—PHOTO BY MARTHA HOY BOHNER.

ducing products on-farm," they said.

Two factors stimulated the value-added part of the business in 1983 - a hungry tourist and Earnie Bohner's desire to use everything grown on the farm, located 1½ miles off a major highway near a children's camp that draws hundreds weekly.

One day a parent from the camp wandered up to Bohner and said, "I'm hungry. Do you have anything to eat?" Bohner replied, "Not now, but we will next year."

With that clue to their future market, the Bohners began making berry products in rented kitchens before building their own licensed processing kitchen on the farm in 1992. They started with Thunder muffins - "huge Texas-style blue-

berry muffins," they explain, "in erratic shapes like thunderhead clouds."

Lured by the blueberry muffins, customers bought other value-added products made and sold on the premises. Soon visitors were coming from all over the country.

The Bohners teamed up with a local chef to develop a line of gourmet food products, now numbering 15 - four different jams, apple butter, barbecue sauces, shiitake mushroom starter kits, and mushrooms. Unique products like "croutakies," crushed dry shiitake mushrooms to flavor soups and salads, and "blazons" (dehydrated blueberries) are very popular.

They added gift packs with mushroom sauce, or buttermilk biscuit mix and jam, a "Best of the Ozarks" gift field crate featuring a product mix, a hand-crafted blueberry design cobbler dish, and a Persimmon Hill Berry Farm berry cookbook.

Sold by e-mail order, by catalogue, and in several local stores, their products proudly display the Agri-Missouri logo. Visit Persimmon Hill Berry Farm's website at www.branson.com/persimmonhill/. ▀

Diana McCown: Goat Cheese Entrepreneur



Diana McCown, an instructor at Wesleyan University in Lincoln, NE, is also a small farmer who runs a dairy goat operation on five acres of land near Martell, NE, outside Lincoln.

PHOTO BY GAYLORO MCCOWN.

The only goat cheese producer in her area, McCown makes six different goat cheeses for her business, Greenglade Farm Specialty Goat Milk Products. She grows the herbs for the cheeses on her farm.

Feta cheese making - McCown's specialty - was part of her grandmother's Greek heritage. She perfected her own

version of Greek feta and even toured cheese plants in Greece to compare the taste of her cheese with feta cheese made in Greece.

McCown began with dairy goats 21 years ago. "I started my cheese business 10 years ago by taking an entrepreneur program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Food Processing Center. The food scientists there worked with me on an individual basis, guiding and making suggestions, while I worked at perfecting my cheeses."

McCown experienced hurdles in getting her dairy facility licensed by the state, as the laws had changed and there was no precedent for a goat milk dairy. She tackled all the barriers until the license was in hand, and Greenglade became the only licensed goat dairy in Nebraska.

She pays an annual fee for her license, and her facility is inspected every two months. She processes all her milk

into cheese at the Food Processing Center cheese plant at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"Using the university's processing equipment saves me money," says McCown, "because most entrepreneurs like me do not have the capital - \$50,000 to \$100,000 - to set up their own processing plant. The Center has machinery to do every kind of food processing, and a range of specialists, including food industry marketing consultants, is on staff. For a fee, any processor can experiment with a new product on a small scale."

McCown sells her cheese through three local stores in Lincoln and at a huge farmers market. She also markets her cheese through one of two new commercial wineries in Nebraska. McCown is content to keep her operation small even though a local supermarket offered to carry her cheese. She sells all she produces to local customers. ▀

Your Small Farm Neighbors

Emma Jean Cervantes: Third-Generation Chile Entrepreneur

Third-generation chile farmer entrepreneur and manufacturer Emma Jean Cervantes continues the tradition of chile cultivation introduced to the Rio Grande region by Spanish settlers in 1600 on land that has been in her family for many generations.

She runs Cervantes Enterprises, Inc., Agribusiness and Apodaca Farms in La Mesa, NM, with the assistance of her children, New Mexico State University graduates in business and marketing.

"Most of the hot sauces you see on the grocery store shelf," Cervantes says proudly, "are grown in New Mexico and many on my farm. Our farm produce is very diversified."

"We constantly rotate our crops and

grow 12 varieties of chiles, corn, pecans, and vegetables like lettuce, onions, garlic and cabbage. We computerize our crop rotation and were pioneers in this valley in drip irrigation, chile transplants, and chile research.

"We process fresh chile for four months of the year and process our value-added chile products through all stages. All of our processing is customized - the buyer dictates recipe specifications."

"Many times we experiment in our quality control licensed lab with a combination of different peppers, spices, vinegar, salt, and the aging/fermenting process, which really changes the characteristics of our product."

Cervantes also has contracts for joint ventures with surrounding farms that grow chile for her processing company. The chile grown and processed on the farm is distributed nationally and internationally.

"Our biggest market tool is customer referrals," she says. "We also work through brokers and sell to local restau-



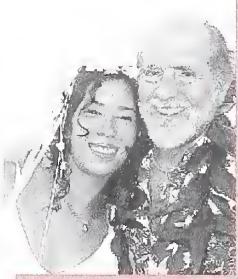
Dino Cervantes (general manager) and his mother, Emma Jean Cervantes (owner).—

PHOTO BY K.C. VANDERLUGT.

rants. The hot sauce market is rapidly growing.

"The biggest challenge in New Mexico agriculture is water - the lifeblood of agriculture - and global competition. We work very closely with our county extension service about what products to grow, product pricing, and new technology that can benefit our operation. We collaborate with New Mexico State University to improve New Mexico chile productivity." ■

Robert Mitnick: Hawaii Taro Company Owner



Robin Uilani Imonti (vice-president - production and control) and father Robert Mitnick (CEO).—PHOTO BY NICOLE WHITE.

"Ideas for new products are all around us," says Robert Mitnick, an innovative entrepreneur in Haiku, Maui, HI, and inventor of "The Maui Taro Burger."

Hawaiians have historically made taro into "poi," a healthy staple food. Since

frying pans, they have made patties out of the taro root. Mitnick expanded this concept into a healthy, no-saturated-fat, no-cholesterol, no-preservative, wheatless, nutritious patty for the health-con-

scious consumer.

After creating the basic recipe, Mitnick consulted with island chefs, who gave him valuable feedback about ways to cook it. He experimented with cooking procedures and ingredients until he was happy with his product.

Mitnick's first business obstacle was a possible low taro supply. He contacted the Hawaii Small Business Development Center (SBDC), where director David Fisher worked closely with him.

"The Center helps entrepreneurs by analyzing their product. We help them see strengths and weaknesses of what they propose and review market threats. The taro burger idea was great," says Fisher.

Fisher referred Mitnick to a taro expert at the University of Hawaii for information about taro as a crop; to the Maui Economic Opportunity for small business start-up loans; and to Robert Chase, director of the Rural Economic Transition Assistance Hawaii (RETAH)

project in the Hawaii SBDC.

Chase connected Mitnick with taro farmers on the islands of Hawaii and Kauai, where he was able to secure a reliable taro supply. Through Chase, Fisher helped Mitnick get a federal grant and suggested further loans from the Hawaii Community Loan Fund.

Mitnick says, "In Hawaii we get 90% of our food from the mainland, and we want to put a dent in that trade deficit. I believe that our economy needs to rely more on value-added agriculture."

The Maui Taro Burger is catching on with both vegetarians and non-vegetarians. Positive customer response in the islands and on the mainland indicate that Mitnick has a successful product.

He recently won contracts to supply it to the military, hospitals, the School Lunch Program, and to a Neiman Marcus Restaurant in Oahu. He says he will produce 8 million Maui Taro Burgers annually for starters and is building his own processing facility. ■

A wide range of resources is available to assist small farmers and ranchers and their communities. Readers wishing further information about the resources listed below are asked to contact the individuals or offices listed for each item.



PRINT MEDIA

Ag Innovation News. A quarterly newsletter of the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI), a state-funded, nonprofit corporation, which focuses on new uses and markets for agricultural commodities and value-added products. Free. To order, write to Dan Lemke, Communications Director, Agricultural Utilization and Research Institute, PO Box 251, Waseca, MN 56093 (or call 1-800-279-5010).

AgVenture Services Business Plan Kit: A Program for Development of Value-Added Agribusinesses. Information from the Florida Department of Agriculture about turning



agribusiness ideas into value-added business enterprises. \$50. To order, call Les Harrison, Division of Marketing and Development at 850-487-4322.

Farming Alternatives. Cornell's Agricultural Development and Diversification Program newsletter focuses on sustainable agriculture and diversification in the Northeast. To order, send \$10, \$20, or \$30 contribution payable to Cornell University to Farming Alternatives Program, Department of Rural Sociology, Warren Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 (phone 607-255-9832).

Starting a Food Processing Business. Business and food safety considerations involved

in food processing. \$40 cost includes updates for 5 years. To order, make check out to Cooperative Extension Service and mail to Business Office, Cooperative Extension Service, PO Box 391, Little Rock, AR 72203.

This Hawaii Product Went to Market: The Basics of Produce, Floral, Seafood, Livestock, and Processed-Product Businesses in Hawaii. Basic business advice about developing a successful small agricultural-related business. \$11 plus \$4 s & h, payable to: Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, 2343 Rose Street, Honolulu, HI 96819 (or call 808-848-2074; fax 808-848-1921).

Ten Tip Sheets from USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program lists free and low-cost resources on a range of agricultural topics. Especially see Tip #2 - Add Value Through Marketing. Access on website www.sare.org or via Valerie Berton, SARE Communications Specialist, 2121 Ag-Life Sciences Surge Building, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-3358 (call 301-405-3186).

A number of grant, loan, and training programs are available to support small farmers and their communities. Examples of such programs are summarized below. Readers wishing additional information are asked to contact the individuals or offices listed for each item.



GRANTS, LOANS, TRAINING



USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program offers grants to eligible applicants in four regions (Northeast, North Central, Southern, and Western).

North Central Region SARE Program (IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI). For information, contact NC Region SARE, UNL, BA Activities Bldg., Lincoln, NE 68583-0840 or call 402-472-7081.

Professional Development Program. Educators, including farmers, may apply to set up sustainable agriculture training for agricultur-

al educators in select agencies. Proposals must be postmarked by 1/20/00.

Northeast Region SARE Program (CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, PA, RI, WV, VA, VT, DC). For information, contact NE Region SARE, Hills Building, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0487 or call 802-656-0471.

Research and Education Grants. Institutions, nonprofits, researchers, and others may apply for funds to support integrated, whole-systems projects. Proposals must be postmarked by 1/20/00.

Farmer Grants. Commercial farmers and growers may apply for funding to implement innovative, environmentally sound, and potentially profitable production and market-

ing strategies. Proposals must be postmarked by 12/6/99.

Southern Region SARE Program (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, PR, U.S. VI). For information, contact John C. Mayne, Ph.D., Southern Region SARE Program, 1109 Experiment St., Griffin, GA 30223 or call 770-412-4787.

Producer Grants. Producers and producer organizations may apply for funds to conduct research, education, or marketing projects that promote sustainable agriculture. Proposals are due 1/28/00.

Western Region SARE Program (AK, AS, AZ, CA, CO, GU, HI, ID, MO, MT, NV, NM, MP, OR, UT, WA, WY). For information, contact Western SARE Program, Utah State University, Agricultural Science Bldg., Rm. 322, 4865 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-4865 or call 435-797-2257.

Farmer/Rancher Grants. The effort supports producer-directed research and community development activities. Calls for proposals are released in mid October 1999 and are due in January 2000.

UPCOMING

EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Oct. 15-16	<i>Fall Garden Day at Truck Crops Experiment Station</i>	Crystal Springs, MS	Richard Snyder - 602-892-3731
Nov. 2	<i>Farmstead Dairy Day</i>	Mosinee, WI	Norm Monsen, Wisconsin Farm Center - 1-800-942-2474
Nov. 19-20	<i>Developing Alternative Agriculture Marketing Skills for the New Millennium Conference, North Central Region SARE</i>	Lincoln, NE	Lisa Bauer - 402-472-0265 lbauer2@unl.edu
Dec. 16	<i>Farm Business Transfer Conference</i>	Newark, OH	Phone 740-349-6900
Jan. 8	<i>North Florida Small Farm Conference and Trade Show</i>	Live Oak, FL	Mickie Swisher - 352-382-1868
Feb. 8	<i>New Mexico Chile Conference New Mexico State University</i>	Las Cruces, NM	Sonja Serna - 505-525-6649
Feb. 8	<i>Tools and Rules for Value-Added Agriculture</i>	Eau Claire, WI	Ed Weber - 715-832-9672

See Small Farm website (www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm) for the most up-to-date listing of events. We welcome submissions of events from our subscribers that would be of interest to the small farm community so that our Upcoming Events listing reflects a diversity of events from all regions of the country. Please send

submissions to Stephanie Olson, Editor, *Small Farm Digest*, CSREES, USDA, Mail Stop 2220, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-2220 (phone: 202/401-6544; fax: 202/401-5179; e-mail: solson@reeusda.gov).

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